

C COURTHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

Upscale milk brand Fairlife accused of animal abuse, environmental wrongs

Fairlife, owned by Coca-Cola, has been accused by animal rights activists of using milk supplied by dairy farms that abuse animals and pollute the waterways.

HILLEL ARON / February 26, 2025



Four varieties of Fairlife, an upscale milk brand owned by Coca Cola (courtesy of Fairlife)

LOS ANGELES (CN) — Fairlife, an upscale milk brand owned by Coca-Cola, was hit with a federal class action on

Wednesday over recent allegations that its suppliers routinely abuse their cows and pollute waterways — practices that run contrary to Fairlife's claims and brand identity.

Launched in 2012, Fairlife — or fa!rlife, as it is styled in marketing materials — purports to be "ultra-filtered" milk, which is to say it goes through a filtration process that removes its lactose and much of its sugar, leaving behind relatively more calcium and protein than other kinds of milk. Fairlife also claims, on its [website](#), to be both animal and environmentally friendly: "patterning with like-minded supplying farms that share Fairlife's commitment to well-cared-for cows" and working hard to lessen its environmental impact.

But in the new lawsuit, four named plaintiffs, including Aryout Michael Thomas Bhotiwihok of Los Angeles, accuse Fairlife of false advertising and betraying that so-called mission.

"In reality, however, the animal care and sustainability marketing scheme and practice are based on materially false, misleading, untrue, and/or unjust claims and omissions," Bhotiwihok and the others say in their [complaint](#).

The class action cites recent [investigations](#) by the nonprofit Animal Recovery Mission that found, according to the plaintiffs, "systemic widespread egregious animal cruelty, cruel standard practices, and extreme neglect,

including at the hands of and with the awareness of management."

According to Animal Recovery Mission, its operatives infiltrated a number of dairy farms that supply milk to Fairlife and captured video footage of calves "violently separated from their mothers, confined in tiny wooden crates, and subjected to relentless abuse by workers and managers," as well as calves left to die from dehydration in 135-degree heat.

Other investigations found, according to Bhotiwihok's complaint, that dairy farms were dumping dead cows "near waterways abutting a suburban subdivision and recreational park land outside of Phoenix, Arizona, causing algae blooms indicating water pollution from the calf carcasses."

The complaint adds: "Fairlife's packaging is not in fact recyclable, despite its multiple claims of recyclability, both on and linked on the packaging."

This is not the first time Fairlife has faced such legal claims. In 2019, when it was still only half-owned by Coca-Cola, it was hit with at least two federal class actions over animal rights abuse, citing earlier investigations by Animal Recovery Mission. In 2022, after it had been fully acquired by Coca-Cola for an initial payment of \$980 million, Fairlife settled those claims, agreeing to pay out \$21 million.

Following the settlement, Fairlife, according to the complaint, "made public statements and settled a

consumer class action false advertising lawsuit in a manner designed to communicate that improvements and solutions had been made, and later advertised that investments in animal care and oversight had been made, indicating to consumers that the animals in the Fairlife supply chain were not in fact being abused or neglected and that they were being treated with higher levels of care."

But, Bhotiwihok and the other plaintiffs contend, the abuse revealed by undercover animal rights activists is worse than ever.

A spokesperson for Fairlife did not respond to an email requesting a comment on the lawsuit.